



ST. STEPHEN'S

EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF RIDGEFIELD

*Belonging
with purpose*

Our Mission: Embracing and living God's commandment to love our neighbors through worship, stewardship, and service to others.

The Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 20, 2026 • 10:00 A.M.

Prelude and Welcome

All stand and join in singing Hymn 665

- 1 All my hope on God is founded;
he doth still my trust renew,
me through change and chance he guideth,
only good and only true.
God unknown, he alone
calls my heart to be his own.
- 2 Mortal pride and earthly glory,
sword and crown betray our trust;
though with care and toil we build them,
tower and temple fall to dust.
But God's power, hour by hour,
is my temple and my tower.
- 3 God's great goodness e'er endureth,
deep his wisdom, passing thought:
splendor, light and life attend him,
beauty springeth out of naught.
Evermore from his store
newborn worlds rise and adore.
- 4 Daily doth the almighty Giver
bounteous gifts on us bestow;
his desire our soul delighteth,
pleasure leads us where we go.
Love doth stand at his hand;
joy doth wait on his command.
- 5 Still from earth to God eternal
sacrifice of praise be done,
high above all praises praising
for the gift of Christ, his Son.
Christ doth call one and all:
ye who follow shall not fall.

Celebrant Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
People **And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever.
Amen.**

Michael

All join in The Collect for Purity

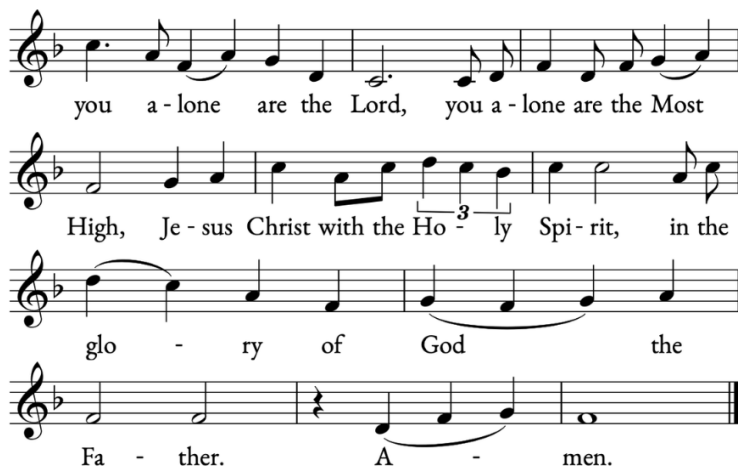
Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires
known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the
thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy
Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily
magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*As we sing, children are invited to follow
Storytime Leaders down to the Choir Room.*

All sing the Gloria in excelsis S-280

Robert Powell

Glo - ry to God in the
high - est, and peace to his peo - ple on earth. Lord
God, heaven - ly King, al - mighty God and Fa - ther, we
wor - ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your
glo - ry. Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the
Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world: have mer - cy on us; you are
seat - ed at the right hand of the Fa - ther: re - ceive our
prayer. For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, _



Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Let us pray. Grant us, Lord, not to be anxious about earthly things, but to love things heavenly; and even now, while we are placed among things that are passing away, to hold fast to those that shall endure; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

All sit for **A Reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Philippians**

To me, living is Christ and dying is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which I prefer. I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better; but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, so that I may share abundantly in your boasting in Christ Jesus when I come to you again.

Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel, and are in no way intimidated by your opponents. For them this is evidence of their destruction, but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well-- since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

Philippians 1:21-30

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

A Portion of Psalm 145 *sung by the choir*

- 1 I will magnify thee, O God, my King; *
and I will praise thy Name for ever and ever.
- 2 Every day will I give thanks unto thee; *
and praise thy Name for ever and ever.

- 3 Great is the LORD, and marvellous worthy to be praised; *
there is no end of his greatness.
- 4 One generation shall praise thy works unto another, *
and declare thy power.
- 5 As for me, I will be talking of thy worship, *
thy glory, thy praise, and wondrous works;
- 6 So that all shall speak of the might of thy marvellous acts; *
and I will also tell of thy greatness.
- 7 The memorial of thine abundant kindness shall be showed; *
and men shall sing of thy righteousness.
- 8 The LORD is gracious and merciful; * long-suffering, and of
great goodness.

All stand and sing **Hymn 705**

Forest Green

- 1 As those of old their first fruits brought
of vineyard, flock, and field
to God, the giver of all good,
the source of bounteous yield;
so we today our first fruits bring,
the wealth of this good land,
of farm and market, shop and home,
of mind, and heart, and hand.
- 2 A world in need now summons us
to labor, love, and give;
to make our life an offering
to God that all may live;
the Church of Christ is calling us
to make the dream come true:
a world redeemed by Christ-like love;
all life in Christ made new.
- 3 With gratitude and humble trust
we bring our best to thee
to serve thy cause and share thy love
with all humanity.
O thou who gavest us thyself
in Jesus Christ thy Son,
help us to give ourselves each day
until life's work is done.

Gospeller The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Matthew.

People **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; and he said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went. When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. And about five o'clock he went out and

found others standing around; and he said to them, 'Why are you standing here idle all day?' They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard.' When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.' When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.' But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?' So the last will be first, and the first will be last." *Matthew 20:1-16*

Gospeller The Gospel of the Lord.

People Praise to you, Lord Christ.

Sermon The Rev'd Whitney F. Altopp, D.Min.

A moment for reflection follows the sermon.

All stand for **The Nicene Creed**

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father.

Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Prayers of the People

Let us pray to the Lord.

People Lord, have mercy.

All kneel for **The Confession of Sin**

Celebrant Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

People **Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will,
and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name. Amen.**

Celebrant Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**

The Peace

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People And also with you.

Offertory Sentence

Celebrant Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and make good thy vows unto the Most High.

Psalms 50:14

Offertory Anthem

Bob Chilcott

Be Thou my Vision – Text at Hymn 488

Lydia Toperzer, soprano

*The flowers on the altar are given
to the glory of God and in memory of
Lance Alexander Kinnaid
Douglas Arthur Main
Emilie Muth Main*

All stand for the **Presentation Hymn** *Old Hundredth*

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
Praise him, all creatures here below,
Praise him above, ye heavenly host,
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

The Great Thanksgiving *Book of Common Prayer p. 367*

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Lift up your hearts.

People **We lift them to the Lord.**

Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People **It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. *The Celebrant prays a Proper Preface.* Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

Sanctus *Mass of St. George, Barry Smith*

Ho - ly, Ho - ly
Ho - ly Lord God of pow'r and might: Heav'n and
earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san-na in the
high-est, in the high - est. Bless - ed is
He who comes in the name of the Lord: Ho
san - na in the high-est, in the high - est.

All stand or kneel as the Celebrant continues and ends with

All Therefore, according to his command, O Father,
We remember his death,
We proclaim his resurrection,
We await his coming in glory;

The Celebrant continues and ends with

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

People **Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily**

bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Breaking of the Bread

Celebrant Alleluia: Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

People **Therefore let us keep the feast: Alleluia.**

Fraction Anthem

Mass of St. George, Barry Smith

Je - sus, Lamb of God,
have mer - cy on us; Je - sus, bear-er of our sins,
have mer - cy on us. Je - sus, Re -
deem-er of the world, give us your peace.

Celebrant The Gifts of God for the people of God.

All join in singing **Communion Hymn**

Verse 1 I love you, Lord

For your mercy never fails me

All my days, I've been held in your hands

From the moment that I wake up

Until I lay my head

Oh, I will sing of the goodness of God

Chorus

And all my life you have been faith - ful,
and all my life you have been so, so good,
with eve - ry breath that I am a -
ble, Oh, I will sing
of the good-ness of God.

Verse 2 I love your voice
You have led me through the fire
In darkest nights
You are close like no other
I've known you as a Father
I've known you as a Friend
And I have lived in the goodness of God

Repeat Chorus

Your goodness is running after,
it's running after me
Your goodness is running after,
it's running after me
With my life laid down, I'm surrendered now
I give You everything
Your goodness is running after,
it's running after me

Chorus repeats twice

All kneel for the **Prayer After Communion**

Celebrant Let us pray.

All **Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Blessing

The Priest pronounces God's blessing and all respond **Amen.**

All stand and sing **Hymn 690**

Cwm Rhondda

- 1 Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,
pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but thou art mighty;
hold me with thy powerful hand;
bread of heaven, bread of heaven,
feed me now and evermore,
feed me now and evermore.
- 2 Open now the crystal fountain,
whence the healing stream doth flow;
let the fire and cloudy pillar
lead me all my journey through;
strong deliverer, strong deliverer.
be thou still my strength and shield,
be thou still my strength and shield.

- 3 When I tread the verge of Jordan,
bid my anxious fears subside;
death of death, and hell's destruction,
land me safe on Canaan's side;
songs of praises, songs of praises,
I will ever give to thee,
I will ever give to thee.

Dismissal

Response **Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.**

Postlude

Music Notes

Today's music reflects on God's enduring goodness, our dependence upon divine grace, and the call to offer our lives in faithful service. Our opening hymn, **All my hope on God is founded**, is Robert Bridges's translation and adaptation of a German hymn by Joachim Neander. Herbert Howells's expansive tune *Michael* gives musical expression to the text's confidence that, amid all earthly "change and chance," God alone remains our sure foundation.

Before the Gospel, **As those of old their first fruits brought** draws upon images of vineyard, field, labor, and harvest. Frank von Christierson's text transforms the ancient offering of first fruits into a present-day commitment to give God the work of our "mind, and heart, and hand." The traditional English melody *Forest Green*, adapted by Ralph Vaughan Williams, carries the text with simplicity and warmth.

Bob Chilcott's setting of **Be Thou my Vision** makes the ancient Irish prayer both intimate and luminous. Its plea that God be our wisdom, light, and "first in my heart" echoes today's Collect, which calls us to turn from passing earthly things and hold fast to those that endure.

At Communion, **The Goodness of God** responds to the psalm's proclamation that "the Lord is gracious and merciful" and to the surprising generosity of the landowner in Jesus' parable.

We conclude with **Guide me, O thou great Jehovah**, William Williams's great hymn of pilgrimage, sung to John Hughes's stirring Welsh tune *Cwm Rhondda*. Its repeated cry for the "bread of heaven" leads naturally from the Eucharistic feast into the journey ahead, as we go forth strengthened to labor, love, and serve.

